



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Policy Manual

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Purpose:

This issuance establishes policy and procedures on determining the Office of Supervision for the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) cases. The immediate safety and quality of uninterrupted services for children and families takes precedent until residence is confirmed.

Policy:

A) CP&P Structure

CP&P provides supervision and case management services to children and families in all 21 counties throughout New Jersey.

B) Determining and Consolidating the Office of Supervision

The Local Office (LO) supervising the mother or primary custodian of the child(ren) is considered the office of supervision. When a child is placed by CP&P in a different catchment area the office of supervision maintains full case management responsibility. In most cases, all active family members are supervised by the same office, this is known as the “office of supervision.” Each active household member is assigned to one CP&P LO. A case goal of “select home adoption” may necessitate that one LO manage the adopting family, and another LO manage the biological family.

C) Family or Child Leaves County Before Initial Field Response is Complete

1. When in-person field response or child protective services investigation activity has begun in response to a referral or report on a new reopened case, but the family changes its county of residence before the initial field response

is completed (i.e., before the child, siblings, parents, and alleged perpetrator are seen), the CP&P LO who was assigned the referral or report maintains responsibility for:

- a. Meeting the assigned timeframes and stabilizing the immediate case situation and ensure the safety of the child(ren).
 - b. Determining where the family makes their permanent residence.
 - c. Documenting reports on the initial response.
2. These activities must be completed ([CPP-II-A-1-100](#), **SCR Generally**), before transferring responsibility for the investigation of the report to the new catchment of residence or before processing the case for closure.

D) Determination in Complex Cases

1. In cases with complex circumstances, (i.e., multiple siblings residing with different relative caregivers in separate catchment areas), determining the office of supervision may be difficult to define. Therefore, the office of supervision's decisions is made on a case-by-case basis to reflect the best interest of the child and family, and based on the CPS report timeframes. Factors to consider for decision-making purposes include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Do the siblings have the same parents?
 - b. Do the siblings have limited family connection or interaction?
 - c. Are there relationships that need to be preserved that would make it beneficial for the children involved to have the same Worker?
 - d. Is there a need for supportive services?
 - e. How long has the child been in the home with the relative/caregiver?
 - f. Are the case plans, goals and shared long-term view of the family being considered?
 - g. Is adoption a case goal for one or more of the children?

E) Setting Up a Separate Household

CP&P may open a separate case for a young adult when the young adult is between the ages of 18 to 21 years old, has an open or closed CP&P case, and has one or more children. CP&P may also choose to continue the adult as a household member in his or her parents' case. Staff are encouraged to weigh the benefits in making this determination. When faced with this situation – either at screening of a report or referral at SCR, or when providing ongoing case management – consider the following:

- a. If the young adult needs, or is receiving, continued, paid services from CP&P to address the adult's needs (i.e., out-of-home placement for the young parent and infant child), consider

maintaining the young adult as a “child” family member on the parents’ case.

- b. If the young adult’s child or children are receiving paid services under a current case number, consider maintaining the young adult and children are receiving paid services under a current case number, consider maintaining the young adult and children as household members in that case (i.e., “grandparents’ case).
- c. If the young adult sets up a separate household from his or her parents, consider whether to establish a new case, with the mother (father, if present/known), and her/their children as household members/participants.

F) Determining in Cases of Referrals from Correctional Facilities on Behalf of Pregnant Inmates

If a referral or report is received from the Department of Corrections on behalf of a pregnant inmate interested in a resource family home, or adoption placement following the birth of that child, SCR assigns the child a welfare assessment referral to the office in the catchment area where the pregnant inmate maintained a legal residence prior to incarceration. The LO, responsible for that jurisdiction, is named the office of supervision.

G) Exceptions When Identifying the Office of Supervision

1. On occasion, there will be circumstances which do not allow for ready application of the general policy for determining office of supervision. Therefore, for the following situations, the office of supervision is the office in the catchment where the child resides:
 - a. The parents’ whereabouts are unknown.
 - b. The parents reside out of state.
 - c. CP&P has a surrender of custody, guardianship, or parental rights have been terminated, or
 - d. Certain children with a case goal of Select Home Adoption.
2. For Safe Haven Infants SCR assigns the child welfare assessment referral to the Local Office responsible for the jurisdiction where the hospital, fire station, or police station is located. If CP&P learns the identity of the birth parent(s) and are in active case status, consult the DAG. If the infant is abused or neglected contact SCR to upgrade to a child protection service investigation (CPS) at the parent(s) residence. SCR assigns the CPS report back to the Local Office as a CPS.

H) Jurisdiction in Reports or Referrals Received After Hours

CP&P Special Response Unit (SPRU) staff handle referrals or reports coming to the attention of the State Central Registry (SCR) after hours (nights, weekends, and holidays). Cases that involve out of home investigations SPRU will contact

the IAIU consultant for guidance. Responsibility for any necessary field intervention after hours lies with the SPRU Worker in the county in which the child is physically located at the time of the report or referral. If a child is located in a county other than the county of supervision and/or residency, SCR will refer the emergency SPRU Worker covering the county in which the child is presently located. This rule applies to abuse or neglect investigations, out-of-home placement disruptions, and any other crisis situations.

I) Transfer of Cases in Litigation

Transfer of any case which is involved in litigation does not take place unless the court, the sending and receiving LO's, and their Deputy Attorneys General (DAG) have been advised and do not object. Notify the court as soon as the decision to transfer is made. If there is a protective service custody order, there should be no less than three (3) months left on the order. A copy of the order must be in the record.

J) Transfer of CPRB Jurisdiction

Child Placement Review Board (CPRB) jurisdiction is established according to law, based upon the child's CP&P office of supervision. Therefore, the general rule is that a CPRB is in the county in which the child's CP&P office of supervision is located. Cases which have been transferred are reviewed on schedule by the sending office when the case has been transferred within 30 calendar days of the CPRB date. The receiving office is invited and encouraged to attend. Any transfer of CPRB jurisdiction requires approval of the court.

K) Exceptions to Transfer

1. Circumstances may occur in which it is more appropriate to provide services to a family member based on proximity to the current office of supervision rather than county or catchment boundaries. Such exceptions are considered when:
 - a. The primary caregiver of a multi-member family moves into a neighboring or nearby county or catchment area and, for continuity of services it would be beneficial not to transfer the case.
 - b. A legal free child whose current placement is a family setting (resource family or treatment home), their placement is 50 miles or less from the sending office. The current placement has been stable for at least 45 calendar days and removal is not imminent.
2. The office of supervision does not change (i.e., the case is not transferred under any of the following circumstances):
 - a. It is beneficial not to transfer the case when family members, other than the primary caregiver of the household, relocates to a permanent address in another catchment area.

- b. To prevent an unreasonable delay in permanency, situations will require local offices to work out cooperative agreements regarding child-specific recruitment in institutional care.
 - c. A child's case is service active in a Local Office and an institutional abuse or neglect report is made or a violation of standards is reported to the Office of Licensing (OOL).
 - d. A court order or pending litigation requires the continued involvement of the office currently providing case management.
 - e. There is a Safety Protection Plan with unresolved issues and without a strong safety team or actions identified.
3. It is best practice to achieve case goals, including termination when possible, within three months of initial involvement with CP&P with children and families. After three months, if the case goal has not been met, transfer the case to the new catchment area. When there are two or more Local Offices in a county, the Local Office Managers who oversee those offices may develop a protocol for the assignment and transfer of cases between their jurisdictions. The protocol is subject to Area Director approval.

L) Pre-Transfer Considerations

1. All case transfers to another office of supervision are done in consultation with the Worker, Supervisor, Casework Supervisor, and Transfer Liaison. Consideration is given to the appropriateness of a case transfer, (i.e., is the move permanent or temporary, is the case in litigation, is continued agency intervention necessary and appropriate). Utilization of [Form 22-23](#), **New Jersey CP&P Family Risk Assessment** will assess the risk level of the case. If the risk level is deemed low or moderate, consideration to close the case should be reviewed.
2. The Worker discusses with the family their plan to resettle in the new catchment area and enters documentation in the case record. All family members are to be seen within 30 days prior to transfer. The families of children in residential placement are also seen within 30 days prior to transfer. Refer to [CPP-III-C-3-100](#), **Minimum Visitation Requirement**. Verify the new address of the family prior to case transfer.

M) Pre-Transfer Case Conference

1. Increased communication between offices helps facilitate smooth case transfers and continuity of services to families. Cases benefit from a pre-transfer conference including but not limited to:
 - a. Cases in litigation.
 - b. Those with large, multi-member families with different goals.

- c. Those cases for which other agencies are providing intensive or extensive support services.
 - d. Those which reflect elements of risk or danger to the personal safety of the CP&P field staff.
- 2. When a case situation suggests the needs for clarification of case information or requires special planning, a pre-transfer conference may be arranged by the Liaisons. Those attending include the sending Worker and Supervisor and the receiving Worker and Supervisor, the Transfer Liaison s may attend too. Conference participants discuss all aspects of the case. All of the agreed upon activities and responsibilities may be entered on [Form 26-52](#), **Contact Sheet**.

N) Problem Resolution

During any part of the transfer process, if the Liaisons have a disagreement they cannot resolve, they shall refer the matter to the Local Office Managers. The LOMs, contact each other to resolve the issue. If the Local Office Managers cannot resolve the issue, the matter is referred to the Area Office(s) for resolution. If any circumstances are identified which preclude provision of necessary or required services by the receiving office (see section Exceptions to Transfer above), an exception to the policy is negotiated between the offices and a copy of the memo outlining the terms of the agreement is sent to both Local Office Managers.

Procedures:

1) Determining Office of Supervision

In emergency situations, the Casework Supervisor (CWS) from the office of supervision notifies the Casework Supervisor from the office covering the catchment area, where the child resides, that an immediate or 24-hour field response by their office is necessary to assure the safety of the child. The CWS in the office covering the catchment area responds immediately, via telephone or email, to any requests for services. After responding, document the information and follow up with a phone call to the office of supervision. Notify staff if follow-up is necessary. The CWS in the office of supervision confirms any services agreed upon, in a follow-up email.

2) Temporary Residence at Time of Referral

- a) If a child is in a temporary residence at the time of application, referral, or report to SCR, the office of supervision remains or becomes the office in whose catchment area the child, primary caregiver or parents makes its residence. Examples of temporary homes or facilities are:

- 1) Juvenile-in-crisis shelters

- 2) Detention centers
 - 3) Shelters and motels
 - 4) Hospitals (public and private)
 - 5) Family domestic violence shelters
 - 6) Mommy and Me substance use disorder treatment facilities, and
 - 7) Group care homes
- b) If a child is in a catchment area different from his residence at the time of report to SCR, and there is a need for an Immediate Response, SCR assigns the report to the Local Office responsible for the jurisdiction where the child victim is located at present. If the child's family is active in another county or catchment area, SCR advises that office of the report that requires an immediate response. The office of supervision provides the responding LO with information which will facilitate "courtesy" investigation and case handling. The responsibility for the immediate response rests with the office in whose catchment area the child at risk is physically located at the time of SCR's report. The safety of the children must take precedence over jurisdictional or response disputes.
- c) CPS 24-hour Response or child welfare assessment referrals assigned to office of supervision for child protection service (CPS) reports coded 24-hour response and all CWS referrals, SCR assigns the intake to the office of supervision. If a report to SCR involves an allegation of abuse neglect under IAIU jurisdiction, the respective regional office will respond. The CWS from the office of supervision may request assistance/response from the CWS of the office covering the catchment area where the child is physically located, to assure the safety of the child.
- d) Placement of the child and preparation for court are done by the office where the caregiver resides, unless doing so would entail a significant delay and could jeopardize the safety of the child. Seek advice from a Deputy Attorney General (DAG) when there is a question of court jurisdiction.

3) Family or Child Leaves County Before Initial Field Response Complete

- a) Casework Supervisors from two field offices confer and negotiate case handling while the referral or report is in intake. After it has been established that the family has moved and made the new county their residence, the LO in the new county of residence may provide:
- 1) Courtesy assistance
 - 2) Immediate action/emergency intervention, if the family is in crisis or the child is at risk
- b) Factors which may affect these arrangements include, but are not limited to the following:
- 1) The physical and significant distance between the two counties

- 2) The urgency of the situation or need for timely CP&P field intervention, face-to-face contact with the child and family, and who can best serve the family whether there is a need for local county-based service or resource referral to stabilize the family
- 3) Whether litigation may be necessary (originated by the county of domicile, filed by the respective DAG)
- 4) Appropriate and practical use of CP&P field staff resources from both respective field offices
- 5) Keeping the best interest of the children as the main goal (i.e. limiting re-interviewing) and maintaining the integrity of the investigation

4) Family or Child Leaves County Before Field Contact Made

- a) If a family relocates from the county or LO which SCR assigned the CPS report/CWS referral for response, before in-person contact with any family member is successful by field staff from the assigned LO, a discussion on the handling of the case occurs before the responsibility for field intervention; including completing incident forms assumed by the LO in the new county of residence. The receiving office responses shall occur within the mandated response times.
- b) The CPS investigation or CWS assessment is reassigned to the county of residence in NJ SPIRIT. No other transfer documentation case recording is required. Discuss/negotiate any response, policy compliance, registration, or jurisdictional issues in good faith between the two Casework Supervisors.

5) Determination in Complex Cases

- a) Casework Supervisors, in the catchment areas of each office involved, conference, discuss and reach an agreement as to how the children's needs in the case will best be served. It is important to always keep in mind the best interests of the children involved in the case when making a decision and reaching an agreement.
- b) The Casework Supervisors reach a mutual agreement as to which office will become the office of supervision and take full responsibility for the case. The Casework Supervisor from the office of supervision completes a [Form 26-52, Contact Sheet](#), in NJS, documenting and confirming the agreed upon roles and responsibilities of each office; the other office obtains a copy of the documentation. If the Casework Supervisors are unable to reach a mutual agreement, the case is referred to the respective LO Managers who respond by close of business day (COB) if the Casework Supervisors are not able to reach an agreement; the timeframe for Area Director(s) for a final determination is 24 hours.

6) Locating and Accessing Services in Other Catchment Areas

- a) To facilitate a timely and thorough provision of services to children in out-of-home placement, particularly those placed in a resource family home, the office covering the catchment area where the child is placed, the office of supervision advises of the child's placement and requests assistance in locating and accessing local services or placement slots contracted specifically for that office.
- b) Local services include, but not limited to the following:
 - 1) Childcare
 - 2) Camps
 - 3) After school programs
 - 4) Adolescents services, including self-sufficiency and transitional services
 - 5) Big Brother/Big Sister
 - 6) Therapy providers and evaluators or diagnostic services i.e., (psychologists, psychiatrists)
 - 7) Medicaid providers for medical and dental care
 - 8) Transportation services for visitation
 - 9) Homemaker services
 - 10) Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) and
 - 11) Youth Advocate Program (YAP)
- c) The office of supervision retains financial responsibility for any service for the child or family requiring payment. Any difficulties in accessing and establishing services for children out of the office of supervision's catchment area may be brought to the attention of the requesting Local Office Manager or, if necessary, the appropriate Area Director.

7) Transfer of Case Management Between Offices

- a) Whenever an active family moves from the catchment area of one Local Office to the catchment area of another, the responsibility for the supervision of the family is transferred to the new office within two weeks of the move. The Worker, Casework Supervisor, and Case Transfer Liaison review the [Form 26-55, Interoffice Case Transfer Checklist](#), unless the case is opened for services.
- b) When the primary caregiver of the children moves from the catchment area of the current local office of supervision to a permanent address in a different catchment area, the supervision of the entire case (including all children, siblings, in free or paid placements who may be residing with different caregivers in various catchment areas) is transferred to the local office responsible for the catchment area where the primary caregiver relocates.
- c) **If a case is in litigation**, this requires a change of venue for court proceedings to the county in which the CP&P case is transferred. The CWS from the local office transferring the case advises the assigned DAG of the

need for a change of venue or of existing special circumstances which may preclude a change of venue for the litigation aspect of the case.

- d) **For cases with complicated family dynamics**, consider whether the households are separate family units and whether separate case numbers should be established for same family members. Many factors are weighed, including whether the family members have a limited connection, what the plan is for each child, etc.
- e) For case management continuity purposes, if the primary caregiver living in a multi LO county moves from one catchment area of the office of supervision to another catchment area in the same county, but the children remain under supervision in the first location, consider not transferring the case.
- f) The office Transfer Liaison determines which office the case is to be transferred to, and coordinates and oversees the transfer related activity. The receiving supervisor reads transfer cases and assigns them within two working days of receipt. Transfer cases receive the same attention as intake case assignments.

8) Transfer Liaison

- a) The Case Practice Specialist (CPS) is the Transfer Liaison, unless the LOM has designated a specific staff member because of exceptional circumstances. The Transfer Liaison's role is to facilitate case transfer and continuity of services to the family. The Liaison's duties include the following:
 - 1) Reviewing and approving all outgoing and incoming transfer cases, to ensure that the terms of the policy have been executed
 - 2) Ensuring transfer cases contain all documents, forms, and NJS case recording, including completed Structured Decision Making (SDM) forms as required, and [CP&P form 26-55](#), **Interoffice Case Transfer Checklist**, and accepting responsibility for them at the time of transfer out of the office
 - 3) Making the assignment/reassignment in NJ SPIRIT (NJS)
 - 4) Ensuring any outstanding bills received prior to transfer are also processed prior to transfer
 - 5) Ensuring any bills incurred prior to transfer or within 30 days after transfer are paid by the sending office regardless of the bill receipt date
 - 6) Ensuring telephone calls regarding transfers are responded to within 24 to 48 hours. Those initiating calls should make it clear that the call is regarding a transfer case
 - 7) Working with the LOM to adjust the resource care budget allocations, and
 - 8) Advising the Resource Unit Supervisor of the change to the resource care budget allocation.

- b) When a case is transferred from one office to another, fiscal responsibility is also transferred, i.e., the cost of services provided after the transfer is charged against the cost center of the receiving office. The receiving office becomes responsible for processing all fiscal related documents within 30 calendar days of successful case transfer.

9) Deficits and Gaps in Case Records Transferred Between Local Offices

- a) The sending Liaison is responsible to assure a case record contains complete and accurate information prior to transfer.
- b) The receiving Liaison calls the sending Liaison when he or she first discovers that a case record has incomplete or missing documents, forms, and or information. Email a memo to the sending office liaison for any incomplete missing documentation from the case record.
- c) If no response is received from the sending Liaison within ten working days, the receiving Liaison sends a second memo. Address the memo to the sending office's Casework Supervisor and copy both LOMs, indicating it is a second request notice. Within ten working days, the Casework Supervisor and LOM ensure that the proper and timely response is made. If the missing information is not received, the receiving LOM refers the matter, in writing, to the Area Office.
- d) If the receiving Liaison determines that the case record is seriously deficient in case documents, forms, or information, copy and maintain the material necessary to operate. Send the actual record back to the originating office for corrections. Document action in a memo from the receiving Liaison to the sending office's Casework Supervisor with a copy to both LOMs.

10) Pre-Transfer Considerations

The worker documents the home visit on the [Form 26-52](#). When a member is missing, the Worker documents efforts to locate the missing members in the case record. For cases in which a missing status has been determined by the sending county or catchment area, the receiving office accepts the case without the sending office making a face-to-face contact. In the event of an immediate response, the assigned Worker makes a face-to-face visit.

11) Case Record Preparation and Documentation

- a) Case records are to be comprehensive and up to date at the time of transfer. The sending office is responsible for updating case recording, related documents, and prepare the following within two (2) weeks prior to case transfer:
 - 1) An updated [CP&P 26-81](#), **Family Summary/Case Plan Assessment**, specifying all case activity, reasons for transfer, and worker safety issues regarding the case situation if needed,

- 2) The [CP&P 26-57](#), **Case Summary for Closing/Transfer**, is used instead of the [Form 26-81](#), when appropriate,
 - 3) Complete and update transfer related NJS paperwork
 - 4) Complete [Form 26-54](#), **Intraoffice Case Transfer Checklist**
 - 5) School transfer activities, when appropriate
 - 6) Medical and health related information, and **Structured Decision Making** forms, see [CPP-III-B-6-600](#).
- b) The steps below need DAG approval because of court involvement:
- 1) Case documentation, affidavits, and evaluations for cases in litigation or cases which may require court action in the future.
 - 2) Title-IV determination for placement cases.
 - 3) Referral for child support determination for placement cases.
 - 4) Child Placement Review (CPR) requirements, include copies of all CPR documents in the case record, refer to [CPP-IV-A-3-200](#), **Review of Children in Placement**. Document CPR schedule in case record.
- c) It is the responsibility of the sending office to process all outstanding bills which have been received in the sending office prior to case transfer. Entering the new supervising office in New Jersey Spirit (NJS) is done by the sending office on the same day the case record is put in inter-office mail.
- d) The sending office retains responsibility of the case until the documents and case record are in possession of the new office.
- e) The Worker notifies the family and the substitute caregiver, other individuals, agencies, or professionals who are actively involved with the case or who are providing ongoing services regarding the impending transfer. They are to be provided with the name, address, and contact number of the receiving office.

12) Procedures for Inter-Office Case Transfer Between Local Offices

- a) **Worker's Responsibilities:** Advise supervisor as soon as the Worker is aware of impending move. Worker and supervisor conference prior to case transfer and discuss with the Transfer Liaison. Meet with all family members in open case status within 30 days prior to transfer. Verify address, and document efforts to locating missing family members. Update and complete case record documents in NJS within two weeks prior to transfer:
- 1) [Form 26-81](#), **Case Plan Assessment**
 - 2) [Form 26-57](#), **Case Summary for Closing/Transfer**
 - 3) [CP&P 26-52](#), **Contact Sheet**
 - 4) Requires SDM forms, see [CPP-III-B-6-600](#), **Structured Decision Making (SDM)**.

- 5) Any other case recording documents/NJS screens, or related case materials.
- 6) Complete case documentation, affidavits, and evaluations for cases in litigation, or cases which may require court action in the future. See NJS for appropriate forms. Complete CPR requirements (see [CPP-IV-A-3-200](#), **Review of Children in Placement**, [Form 18-35](#), **Child Placement Review Notice of Change**, and all copies of CPR documents are to be in the case record). If necessary, arrange a school transfer. Send letter notifying family and other involved parties of impending transfer
- b) **Supervisor's Responsibilities:** The supervisor reviews the case record materials. Then the supervisor reviews, signs, and dates the [Form 26-81](#), **Case Plan Assessment**, [Form 26-57](#), **Case Summary for Closing/Transfer**, the SDM forms, out-of-home assessment forms, and NJS forms, as applicable.
- c) **Transfer Liaison(s) Sending and Receiving Responsibilities:** Negotiate exceptions to policy and prepare memo outlining exception(s). Send a copy of the memo to respective Local Office Managers (LOMs), then determine the receiving office for the transfer. Contact receiving office Transfer Liaison and discuss impending transfer, determine if a face-to-face conference is warranted. Oversee and coordinate transfer related activity, and review case record and documents.

13) Clerical Duties

Ensure all materials are secured and in the appropriate sections in the case record. Complete NJS data entry on day of transfer to receiving LO, and forward record to the new LO of supervision.

Key Terms (Definitions):

- “**Office of Supervision**” refers to the office in whose county or catchment are the family is residing. See **Legal Basis and Determining Municipality at Application in Unusual Situations** at [CPP-III-C-1-200](#).
- “**Service-active**” refers to a family member or client with whom a CP&P office develops a service contract in which the family member or client has the principle responsibility for successfully implementing the case plan.

Forms and Attachments:

- [Form 18-35](#), **CP&P Child Placement Review Notice of Change**
- [Form 26-52](#), **Contact Note**
- [Form 26-54](#), **Intraoffice Case Transfer Checklist**

- [Form 26-55](#), Interoffice Case Transfer Checklist
- [Form 26-57](#), Case Summary for Closing/Transfer
- [Form 26-81](#), Case Plan Assessment
- SDM Forms:
 - [Form 22-22](#), Safety Assessment (In-Home Cases),
 - [Form 22-23](#), Family Risk Assessment,
 - [CP&P 22-26](#), New Jersey CP&P Family Risk Reassessment (In-Home Cases), and
 - [Form 22-27](#), New Jersey Family Reunification Assessment

Policy History:

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